

NOTES ON INDIAN CHILD-LANGUAGE.

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To the language of the Indian child but little attention appears to have been given. Its importance for comparison with the speech of children in other parts of the globe is very great, and its investigation may shed some light upon theories of the origin and development of language such as the one set forth by Mr. Horatio Hale. In the last few years there have appeared several valuable works relating to the general subject of child-language, its phonology and vocabulary. Besides the studies of Schultze¹, von der Gabelentz², and Taine³, we find in "Titin: A Study of Child-Language," by Señor D. A. Machado y Alvarez, of Seville⁴, a most interesting investigation of the language-development of the Señor's two children, both as regards sound and signification. Only last year Prof. A. H. Sayce⁵ published a list of curious words belonging to the "Children's Language in the Omani Dialect of Arabia," and Mr. Hale⁶, in his elaborate essay on the "Development of Language," has dwelt upon many of the peculiarities of infantile speech, as also has Prof. Joseph Mikch⁷ in his interesting essay "L'Idée et la Racine." The articles of Señor Machado and Professor Sayce will be of considerable value for comparison with the Indian data given in this paper.

Canon Farrar⁸, discussing the question whether children if left to themselves would evolve the rudiments of a language, makes this statement:

"It is a well-known fact that the neglected children in some Canadian and Indian villages, who are often left alone for days, can and do invent for themselves a sort of *lingua franca*, partially or wholly unintelligible to all except themselves."

¹ Die Sprache des Kindes, 1880.

² See Hale, Op. cit., p. 113.

³ In Revue Philosophique, 1876, pp. 1 et seq.

⁴ Trans. of Philol. Soc. (Lond.), 1885-'7, pp. 68-74.

⁵ "Academy" (London), No. 915, November 16, 1889, pp. 324-'5.

⁶ Proceedings of Canadian Institute, 3rd series, Vol. VI, 1887-'8, pp. 92-134. Espec. pp. 96, 97, 113, 132.

⁷ Revue de Linguistique et de Philologie comparée. Tome XIX, 1886, pp. 189-206, 213-231. Espec. pp. 195-197.

⁸ Chapters on Language. New Edition, London, 1873, p. 14.

The writer has not as yet been able to discover by what authority this assertion is made, but, having had his attention drawn to the subject, has gathered together some information which may prove of interest and value.

A search through a dictionary for "child-words" is but too often labor lost or nearly so. For example, the "Arawak-deutsches Wörterbuch" contained in the *Bibliothèque Linguistique Américaine*¹ yielded only the following:

Awáwa (Väterchen, Papa).—Papa. The ordinary Arawak word is *iti* (Vater, Vaterbruder, Mutterbruder).

Jája (Hängematte).—Hammock. The usual Arawak word is *uk-kura* (*ukkurahü*) or *hamaka*.

Seessuban (sich setzen, sitzen).—To seat one's self, to sit down.

The usual Arawak word is *abaltin* or *aballatin*.

While among the Mississaguas of Scugog, Ontario, in the summer of 1888, the writer was able to discover only two words used specially by children: *tētē* (= father, papa) and *dōdō* (= mother, mama). These words (sometimes with interchanged significations) occur very frequently, with more or less modified vocalism, as the names for "father" and "mother" among primitive peoples,² and may not ineptly be compared with our own English *dada*, etc. From the Rev. Allen Salt (a Mississagua) two other words were obtained: *Tup-pe-ta*.—Greasy. The ordinary word is *pemedáwese* (it is greasy). *Nun. na*.—Sweet. The ordinary word is *wēeshkoobun* (it is sweet).

A careful examination of the Algonkin Dictionary of the Abbé Cuoq³ has yielded the following "child-words," which the writer has extracted and arranged alphabetically:

Bobo.—Hurt. Used by parent to child. *Andi bobo?* Where are you hurt? The word is borrowed from French *bobo*.

Djodjo.—Used: 1) by child wishing to be suckled, 2) = mama, mother. In the latter sense it is used not merely by children but also by grown-up persons, who often say *ní djodjo* (my mother), *ki djodjo* (thy mother), etc., instead of the usual *nin ga*, *ki ga*, etc. Cuoq considers *djodjo* to be a child-word for *totoc* (*totosh*, teat, breast).

¹ Tome VIII, Paris, 1882. See pp. 104, 120, 153.

² See the list given by Buschmann in *Verh. der Berl. Acad. des Wiss. a. d. Jahre, 1852*, Berlin, 1853; also Uméry in *Revue Orientale et Américaine*, VIII (1863), 335-338, and Wedgwood, *Dict. of Engl. Etymol.*, 3d ed., 1878, li-lil.

³ *Lexique de la langue algonquine*. Montréal, 1886.

E, é, é!—Yes. The affirmative particle used by children consists of *é* repeated several times.

Enh.—No. Used by very young children. Cuq remarks the curious fact that with adults, *eh!* or *enh!* signifies "yes," and states that its pronunciation "varies according to the age, sex, condition, and sentiments of the speaker."

Ioio.—Hurt (same as *bobo*). From it are formed: *ioioc* (bad hurt), *ioiociw*, *i* (to have a bad hurt).

Kaka.—1) game, 2) tender part of flesh. Cuq says that little children denote by this word all sorts of game (bear, beaver, deer, partridge, etc.), and also, in particular, the tender part of the flesh of birds, amphibious animals, fish, etc. A derivative from this word in use in the language is *kakawandjigan*, cartilage, marrow, soft part of animals, fish, etc.

Kakac (*kakash*).—1) = *Pipi* and *caca* (French), 2) dirt, filth, uncleanness. A mother will say to her child *ki kakaciki* (tu fais *caca*, tu fais *pipi*), *ki kakaciw* (thou art dirty).

Koko.—Name given by little children to any terrible being. This is probably the *Gougou*, that monster of the Indian imagination of which we read in Champlain and Lescarbot, and which was supposed to live on an island in the Baie des Chaleurs. Indeed, Lescarbot¹ speaks of "*la plaisante histoire du Gougou qui fait peur aux petits enfans.*" A mother says to her child *koko ki gat aiawik* (beware of the *koko*).

Labala.—An individual of the white race.

Lolo.—Used by little children when asking to be put back into the cradle. Cuq compares the French *dodo*.

Mamon.—Used by mothers to little children to induce them to go to sleep.

Nana.—Everything that is eaten without the aid of a spoon.

Nanan.—Candy, sweetmeats, bon-bons. Cuq considers that this word is probably of French origin.

Paboc (*pabosh*).—Everything that is eaten with a spoon.

Pipi.—Used by little children when asking for water.

Sesewan.—This word is used only to little children, to prevent them taking up or eating something dirty, or some forbidden object. The radical *Se!* means "fie!"

Tadjic (*tadjish*).—An exclamation of admiration.

Tata.—Papa, father.

¹ Histoire de la Nouvelle France, 1612. Ed. Tross, pp. 371-395.

In conversing with Odjídjatékha, an educated and intelligent Mohawk from Brantford, Ontario, I learned that the fact of the existence of "child-words" had come under his notice. He was able to remember four only of these:

Gi-ti-ni.—Horse. The ordinary Mohawk word is *ga-nuh-sa*.

O-dji.—An exclamation of fear, fright.

Tata.—Bread. The ordinary word is *ga-na-tah-ro*.

Wa-wa.—Meat. The ordinary word is *O-wa-ra*.

He also mentioned the curious fact that there is some difference between the pronunciation of the men and the women, the former, for example, saying *dota* and the latter *toda*, the consonants being vigorously uttered in each case. The first of the "child-words" in question, *gi-ti-ni*, was, so Odjídjatékha informed me, an invention of his own when a little boy.

Cuoq¹ in his Iroquois Dictionary gives some examples of "child-words" in that dialect. These I have here arranged alphabetically for more explicit reference. He calls attention to the existence of the letters *b*, *p*, and *m* in these words, letters which are entirely foreign to the language of the adult Iroquois.

Aa.—Used with sense of French *caca*.

Ah.—Something dirty or bad tasting.

Aia.—Hurt. Same signification as French *bobo*.

Atsio.—Signifies heat and burns, cold, chilblains, etc. (*Le chaud et les brûlures, le froid et les engelures*).

Ba.—Expresses the action of kissing, etc. (*baiser, embrasser*).

En.—Expresses approval, consent, obedience.

Enh.—Expresses refusal, rejection, repulsion.

Fa.—Expresses a disagreeable odor.

Iaiaa.—Used to designate fruit with pips, stones (*fruits à pépin*).

Kak.—Signifies a bite, cut, etc.

Man.—Used when asking for food, drink, etc.

Mants.—Used when asking to be suckled.

Mionts.—Used to name cats.

Oo.—Used when asking to be put in a vehicle, canoe, etc.

Otsih.—Expresses fear produced by the sight of a human being, an animal, etc.

Tataa.—Bread, cake.

Taten.—Used when asking to be taken up and carried in the arms of father or mother.

¹ Lexique de la langue iroquoise. Montréal, 1882, pp. 191-192.

Tsets.—Expresses the idea of goodness, beauty.

Tsiap.—Expresses the idea of a fall into water.

Tsiotsioo.—Used in asking for porridge, broth, and all that is eaten with a spoon.

Ttsitsii.—Used in pointing out a little mollusk, an insect, a reptile, causing fear.

All these words, Cuoq states, "Are spoken in a peculiar manner, which no writing can perfectly express." The Iroquois and Algonkin dialects here treated of are those spoken by the Indians belonging to those stocks at the Lake of the Two Mountains, Province of Quebec.

There appear to be a few resemblances in the Algonkin and Iroquois "child-words" cited above, viz:

Algonkin: E, enh, nana, tata.

Iroquois: En, enh, man, tota.

The writer does not desire at present to discuss the remoter origin and inter-relation of the "child-words" brought together in this brief essay, but hopes that additions will be made to the data there given from other sources, and that on some future occasion the subject may be discussed in its wider aspects.